

**PROPOSITION 84 AGRICULTURAL WATER
QUALITY GRANT PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS NOTICE
SEPTEMBER 5, 2008**

**APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY 5:00 P.M.
ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2008.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is administering a nonpoint source grant program to improve agricultural water quality. The Central Valley Regional Water Board (Regional Water Board) received \$8 million of Proposition 84 bond funds to aid Central Valley farmers to implement management practices to reduce the discharge of pollutants from agricultural operations into surface waters.

II. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

This section provides instructions for preparing and submitting an application for the attached Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The section consists of three subsections: How to Submit, What to Submit, and Requirements for Attachments. It is important that the applicant follow the Application Instructions to ensure their application will address all of the required elements. Applicants are reminded that once the application has been submitted to the State Water Board, any privacy rights as well as other confidentiality protections afforded by law with respect to the application package will be waived.

Applicants will be evaluated and scored based on the information provided in the RFQ and the expertise of the reviewers.

A. HOW TO SUBMIT

Applicants must submit a complete application on-line using the State Water Board Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST). The on-line FAAST application for the Proposition 84 Agricultural Water Quality Grants Program will be made available the week of September 8, 2008. The application can be accessed at the following secure link:

<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>

Applicants will enter information on the following three (3) application sections: General Information, Application Questionnaire, and Application Attachments. In General Information, applicants will enter a project title, project description, funding amount, and responsible Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Submit the RFQ application only when the applicant has gathered and entered all required information. At the time the RFQ application is submitted, an automated confirmation e-mail will be sent to the applicant confirming the date and time of submission.

- If an applicant has a question or problem with FAAST, please contact FAAST staff by phone at 1-866-434-1083, Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M., or by e-mail at faast_admin@waterboards.ca.gov.

- If an applicant has a question as to the content or information requested in the RFQ Notice, please see the Contact Persons included at the end of this RFQ Notice.
- The RFQ application in FFAST consists of pull down menus or text boxes that will be used to submit answers to the questions.

FFAST USER HINTS:

- **Applicants should use a PC. Use of a Macintosh Computer will impede your ability to save your work to FFAST.**
- **Applicants should use Internet Explorer, version 6.0, or above. Use of any other internet browsers will impede your ability to save your work to FFAST.**
- **The character limit is indicated for each text box. Text box answers can range from 500, 1000, 1500, or 2000 characters (includes spaces and characters).**

B. WHAT TO SUBMIT

The RFQ application consists of a questionnaire and two attachments. The majority of the proposal content will be contained in the attachments. The remainder of the proposal content will be provided in response to questions directly entered into FFAST.

FFAST tracks attachments by an **attachment title, not file name**. When uploading an attachment in FFAST the Attachment Title naming convention is as follows:

AttX_AttachmentName_#ofTotal#

Where “AttX” is the attachment letter; “AttachmentName” is the name for the attachment as specified below in the RFQ Notice; and “#ofTotal#” allows the reviewer to know how many files make up an attachment, where “#” is the number of a file and “Total#” is the total number of files submitted in the attachment. For example, Attachment A – Statement of Support is made up of 2 files, the second file in the attachment submittal would be named: AttA_StmtSup_2of2.

The file name section in FFAST requires a computer path to the file location on the applicant's computer. While there is no specific naming convention given here for the file name, applicants should consider using a similar name to the attachment title to simplify personal file management. **Do not use special characters such as dashes, asterisks, symbols, spaces, percentage signs, etc. Underscores are acceptable, as shown above.**

C. REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTACHMENTS

Applicants are required to submit Attachments A and B to complete the RFQ for the Central Valley Region under Proposition 84 Agricultural Water Quality Grants Program. Please refer to the Minimum Submittal Requirements in the attached RFQ for discussion of the required attachments.

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (Regional Water Board) is issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for public agencies and non-profit organizations qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code for the project listed below. Further information on the Agricultural Water Quality Grants Program (AWQGP) under Proposition 84 can be found at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/awqgp/index.shtml

Attachment A is an information sheet on the grant process and the Proposition 84 AWQGP grant money.

MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT OF PROJECTS TO IMPLEMENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO IMPROVE SURFACE WATER QUALITY FROM AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Schedule:

Workshop on grant and RFQ: **17 September 2008**
Deadline to submit qualifications using FFAST: **14 October 2008**
Tentative deadline to select grantee: 3 November 2008
Expected project start date: 2 January 2009
Expected project end date: 31 March 2013

Available funds: \$8,027,158

Required matching funds: \$1,665,635

Grant Distribution:

- No more than 10% of total grant will be used by grantee for direct project costs associated with the administration and project management of grant.
- At least 83% of total grant will be spent on individual projects to growers and/or water districts (Recipients) that will implement management practices that result in improvement of surface water quality.
- No more than 7% of total grant to be budgeted for technical and consulting services through subcontracts to provide assistance to growers in designing and implementing management practices.

All costs associated with this project are incurred by the grantee prior to being invoiced to the Regional Water Board. No Advance Payment is allowed. Only work specified in the grant agreement will be reimbursed.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF WORK

The grantee will provide project management, administrative support and oversight for projects to implement the management practices identified in Regional Water Board-approved Management Plans. The Management Plans are designed to improve surface water quality for agricultural lands. The grantee will cooperate and work with Regional Water Board staff to ensure the project agreements between the grantee and individuals receiving grant money (i.e., the Recipients) are followed and fulfilled.

The grantee will provide a variety of services including outreach, program management (invoicing and reporting), program support and coordination with Recipients, Coalition Groups¹, technical advisors/consultants and other parties as part of their scope of work. The grantee will execute agreements or contracts with one or more eligible parties per project. The grantee will be required to subcontract with other partners (U.C. Cooperative Extension, resource conservation districts, county agricultural commissioners, etc.) whose services may be required to implement responsibilities outlined in the project description.

The grantee will manage grant funds and reimburse sub-contractors and Recipients for work performed. Grant funds can not be used for work performed prior to award and approval of the executed grant agreement, either for this RFQ or for individual projects.

BACKGROUND

The Central Valley Region of California includes more than seven million acres of cropland under irrigation with several thousand individuals and agencies involved in agricultural practices that can result in discharges of waste. The Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) covers irrigated agricultural lands under a conditional waiver. As defined by Regional Water Board Order No. R5-2006-0053 for Coalition Groups in the ILRP, irrigated lands are "lands where water is applied to produce crops including, but not limited to, land planted to row, vineyard, pasture, field and tree crops, commercial nurseries, nursery stock production, managed wetlands, rice production, and greenhouse operations with permeable floors that do not currently discharge under waste discharge requirements (WDRs), National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permits, or other NPDES permits."

To comply with the conditional waiver, most growers have elected to join Coalition Groups to meet the requirements of the ILRP monitoring and reporting program. The ILRP requires a management plan in areas where two or more exceedances of water quality objectives have been found. As part of the management plan, the source or cause of the water quality exceedance is identified and management practices, if applicable, are implemented to improve water quality. Evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented management practices is part of the Management Plan. The Management Plan specifies the methods by which the Coalition Group will evaluate effectiveness.

The Central Valley Region also has approximately 2,000 confined animal facilities, of which about 1,550 are dairies (approximately 80 percent of California dairies are located in the Central Valley). The Regional Water Board regulates the majority of those dairies under Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) General Order No. R5-2007-0035 for Existing Milk Cow Dairies. Dairy owners/operators that use wastewater from their dairy operations to irrigate fields fall under the Dairy Program.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grantee will perform the following services:

- Provide project oversight including solicitation, application development and review,

¹ A Coalition Group is a group of dischargers and/or organizations that choose to comply with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Conditional Waiver by forming a group approved by the Central Valley Regional Water Board.

- and award processing for specific on-the-ground projects to be funded.
- Conduct outreach activities to inform growers and operators of funding availability, terms of the funding for management practice implementation, and appropriate management practices to be implemented for the project area.
- Act as the responsible party for all invoicing and coordinating with each funded project. Audits will be performed periodically by Regional Water Board staff to ensure an auditable trail is established.
- Act as the responsible party for preparation and submittal of monthly/quarterly progress reports covering all grant items completed by Recipients, subcontractors, and eligible parties.
- Coordinate with other agencies or entities to provide documentation of matching funds.
- Work with Regional Water Board to establish the Advisory Committee that will select the individual grant projects. The Advisory Committee will consist, but is not limited to, a Regional Water Board staff member, the grantee, a subwatershed/Coalition Group representative, and may include representatives from the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, the Department of Pesticide Regulation, agricultural commissioners, and other interested parties.
- Prepare an agreement between the Recipients and the grantee for access to area where management practices will be implemented and terms/conditions for receipt of grant money.
- Track the progress of funded management practice implementation.
- Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of management practices implemented to improve surface water quality.
- Subcontract with other agencies and parties as required to complete work included in this project description.
- Coordinate with other entities and parties involved in the implementation of the management practices such as Coalition Groups and sub-watershed groups.
- Perform or subcontract to ensure that plans for maintenance or servicing necessary for management practices funded this project are developed.

The grantee must designate a Project Director as the main point of contact.

The grantee will solicit and inform growers and operators of the availability of grant money to implement management practices in areas identified as being under an approved management plan. The grantee will coordinate with coalition groups and sub-watershed groups to locate growers or operators that may be eligible Recipients for funding.

The grantee will screen individual eligible party proposals before sending the proposals to an Advisory Committee for grant selection. The grantee will work with the Recipient and Regional Water Board staff to write a Landowner Access/Recipient agreement. As part of the conditions, the Recipient will allow access to Regional Water Board staff to inspect the progress of the implemented management practices. The grant agreement may also include maintenance and service requirements to ensure proper operation of the implemented management practices.

Reporting by Recipients will be required on a schedule set within the approved Landowner Access/Recipient agreement. Invoicing by Recipients and technical advisors/consultants will be through the grantee. Audits of invoices and billing will be made by Regional Water Board

staff. All state requirements for grant funding must be met and adhered to during the extent of the grant.

The grantee will subcontract for technical services and outreach with other agencies and organizations, such as the county agricultural commissioners, the resource conservation districts, and the U.C. Cooperative Extension. One subcontract must involve the development and distribution of a manual for best management practices on the installation and/or maintenance of on-farm systems or practices.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

Projects must be located in a sub-watershed with a Management Plan approved by the Regional Water Board. The projects must be located within the Regional Water Board boundaries and on property covered by a Regional Water Board program for agricultural lands such as the ILRP or the Dairy Program. Individual projects must involve the implementation of management practices that affect surface water quality only. All funded projects must have a landowner access agreement signed by the eligible party that includes GPS information for the project site. Individual agreements may also include a written assurance that the Recipient will maintain and service installed or constructed management practices to ensure proper operation. The Recipient assumes the cost for operation, maintenance and service.

Individual projects may include the following:

Installation or construction of:

- single-field or multi-field settling basins or silt traps, or other features such as filter strips and vegetated waterways that reduce off-site movement of sediment or pesticides associated with sediment
- irrigation/storm water recirculation systems
- fencing to enclose riparian areas on irrigated lands not covered under the Dairy Program (e.g., cattle on irrigated pasture) to prevent livestock from entering waterways
- equipment to facilitate use of water quality improvement technologies
- low pressure or drip irrigation systems
- pesticide application control practices such as sprayer calibration

The individual projects that are funded must be selected from activities that are conducted under a Regional Water Board approved management plan and address contaminants from irrigated agriculture. Once implemented, the cumulative effort of individual projects funded under this grant should show improvements in receiving water quality.

Each individual project will require documentation on the work to be performed, cost estimates, and compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The scope of work, schedule, reporting requirements, and cost estimates for each individual project will be negotiated between the grantee, the Regional Water Board staff, and the Recipient. The Regional Water Board staff will have final approval of conditions and content of the individual project work plan(s).

FUNDING MATCH REQUIREMENTS

The individual Recipient is required to provide a funding match of 25%. "Funding match" means funds made available by the applicant from non-State sources.² The funding match may include, but is not limited to, federal funds, local funding, or donated and volunteer services from non-state sources. For all programs the funding match is calculated based on total project cost for which funding is requested. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) reserves the discretion to review and approve funding match expenditures.

For matching funds, additional documentation to support the amount claimed as match for each invoice must be submitted.

MINIMUM SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Public agencies and non-profit organizations interested in providing services for this grant opportunity shall complete an application questionnaire through the Financial Application Assistance Submittal Tool (FAAST) located online at <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>.

Submittals will be scored only upon receipt of the following minimum criteria, which are mandatory and posted at the FAAST website for Proposition 84 AWQGP Applicants:

- Submitting organization
- Legal Name on file with the Secretary of State and Federal Identification Number of the agency or organization.
- An estimate of personnel time and costs (labor rates on hourly basis), materials and supplies, and operating expenses for grantee to perform the project management, administrative support, and oversight requirements of this grant.

Additional information required for a complete application must be submitted as a Word document attachment.

- Attachment A -- Statements of Support
 - Two written statements of support from a cooperating entity, such as a Coalition Group, a dairy industry group, a subwatershed group, or an agricultural organization, with contact name, address and phone number. Written statements will be limited to one page for each cooperating entity, minimum 11 point font.
- Attachment B -- Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) limited to two pages, minimum 11 point font.
 - The applicant's professional experience in performing services of a similar nature with a description of professional experience and background of the agency/organization in relation to project management, cooperative work, and outreach with the agricultural community, Coalition Groups, dairy industry, and subwatersheds.
 - A list of proposed personnel to be assigned to and involved with the project. The list should identify each person's professional experience and qualifications, as well as the description of professional experience and background of any sub-consultants that will provide technical support. The percentage of time each person will spend on the project must be estimated and stated.
 - A description of any other background, training, skill, or experience relevant to the firm/organization and/or personnel assigned to the project.

² A state agency, though, may use state funds and services for the funding match.

- Examples of completed or on-going work that illustrate project management skills, outreach efforts, and ties to the agricultural community.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE

- Program Knowledge
Each SOQ should clearly state the grantee's expertise and experience with the requirements of the ILRP or Dairy Program.
- Public Outreach and Facilitation
The grantee shall have expertise and demonstrate an understanding of conducting public outreach and the skills necessary for facilitation and cooperative agreement. The grantee should have experience in establishing public involvement, in conducting or assisting in conducting various public meetings, and the preparation of supporting materials (newsletters, public notices, website, etc.).
- Knowledge of the Central Valley Region
The grantee shall demonstrate knowledge of and expertise in the Central Valley Region, its environment, water quality issues, and the relevant concerns of the agricultural community and regulatory agencies.
- Availability, Schedule, and Project Management
The availability of the grantee and its team will be an important selection factor. The SOQ must clearly identify the person that will be responsible for directing the team (Project Director). Describe the Project Director's relevant experience in such a role, the expertise that the person brings to the role, and the percentage of time that will be devoted to the grant.
- Any additional information related to selection criteria.

SELECTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

Selection of the grantee will be based on the following criteria:

1. The applicant's professional past experience in project management, cooperative work, and outreach with the agricultural community, Coalition Groups, dairy industry, and watershed groups.
2. Quality and relevance of completed or ongoing work
3. Reliability
 - Demonstrated reliability and continuity of firm/organization's proposed staff and sub-consultants.
 - Description of workload and demonstrated ability to meet grant requirements and schedules.

The grantee will be selected on the basis of written responses to this RFQ and an oral presentation. Submittals will be evaluated and scored based upon the stated selection criteria for those agencies/organizations who have complied with the minimum qualifications requirements. The information provided in the section labeled "Desirable Qualifications and Expertise" will also be used to evaluate and score each SOQ.

Three agencies/organizations with the highest scores will be selected for the "short list." These applicants will be invited for an interview and asked to make an oral presentation that should include a proposed scope of work and their organization's qualifications and experience.

Central Valley Regional Water Board
Proposition 84 AWQGP

Upon completion of all interviews, the agencies/organizations will be ranked in order of preference. The number one applicant will be asked to submit a detailed line item budget and scope of work for the work noted in this RFQ. If acceptable, further documentation including the Project Director Certification Form, the CEQA Environmental Information Form, and the required elements of the grant agreement will be negotiated with Regional Water Board and State Water Board staff before execution and project implementation.

For more information, please contact Margaret Wong at (916) 464-4857 or mawong@waterboards.ca.gov, or Margie Read @ (916) 464-4624 or mread@waterboards.ca.gov.

**PROJECTS TO IMPLEMENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
TO IMPROVE SURFACE WATER QUALITY FROM AGRICULTURAL LANDS
Grant Process -- Frequently Asked Questions**

Question: ***What funding will be available in the Central Valley to implement management practices?***

Answer: A total of \$13.72 million is available under the Proposition 84, Agricultural Water Quality Grant Program. About \$8 million dollars is allocated to the Central Valley Regional Water Board (Regional Water Board) to implement management practices to improve surface water quality. At least \$6.6 million will be used to implement actual management practices under an approved Management Plan, with the remainder to be budgeted for technical and consulting services, and for direct costs associated with administration and project management of the grant.

Question: ***Who will be the Grantee?***

Answer: The Grantee will be a public agency or a non-profit organization. The Grantee will provide project management, administrative support, and oversight for individual projects. The Grantee will disburse grant money to Recipients for individual projects to implement management practices under a Regional Water Board approved Management Plan.

Question: ***How will the Grantee and Recipients be chosen?***

Answer: The Regional Water Board will select the Grantee using a competitive process. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be distributed to interested parties. Applicants will submit required information and their qualifications using FFAST. Specific selection criteria are listed in the RFQ and will be used to select the Grantee.

After selection, the Grantee and the Regional Water Board will develop the grant agreement, including the process for selecting Recipients. The process will be used to select Recipients for funding of individual projects to implement management practices. Each Recipient will be required to provide a funding match of 25% which may include, but is not limited to, federal funds, local funding, or donated and volunteer services from non-State sources.

Question: ***How long is the term of the Prop 84 AWQGP grant?***

Answer: \$6 million of the grant money is in the FY 2007/2008 budget and currently available. It must be encumbered by June 2009 and spent by June 2012. The remainder of the grant money will be in the FY 2008/2009 budget and must be encumbered by June 2010 and spent by June 2013.

Question: ***Are other funding sources available?***

Answer: The Grantee will work with each Recipient to consider Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other Federal and local programs for matching funds.

Question: ***When and how will grant funds be disbursed to Recipients:***

Answer: The Grantee will be responsible for all reimbursements to the Recipients. A Recipient can request disbursement of grant funds following the terms of the Landowner Access/Recipient agreement once it has been executed. Only work performed after the grant agreement is executed and within the scope of the grant agreement is eligible for reimbursement.

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